

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system for monitoring usage of a utility at a remote location by a central station and incorporates a real time method for optimizing energy costs operationally by combining optimization algorithms and real time pricing data to lower costs to the energy user. The system includes a meter reading module for determining an amount of usage at the remote location and generating a data signal indicative of the determined amount of usage and a personal computer (PC) located at the remote location and connected to the meter reading module. The PC is connectable to the internet for receiving and storing the data signal from the meter reading module for transmission to a processor located at the central location via the internet. The meter reading module is connected to one of an electrical, gas or water meter. The processor determines an amount of usage of the utility based upon the data signal. The meter reading module is connected to the PC via one of a hardwired connection, X-10 technology or sent over existing telephone lines. The processor is able to generate a bill based upon a determined amount of usage and transmit the bill to the PC in the form of one of an e-mail message, Internet browser or other Internet related technologies. Payment of the bill by the PC at the remote location is performed automatically over the Internet via online banking protocols or other internet related payment technologies.